



Illinois Families Now & Forever®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship

Students on college path with DCFS scholarship

Imagine settling into life on a college campus as a first-year student, knowing that tuition is already paid in full. That is a real life situation for the young people who are benefitting from the DCFS Scholarship Program.

Scholarship recipients can take advantage of full tuition and waivers for mandatory fees if they attend one of the nine Illinois state universities or Illinois junior colleges. They also receive a monthly maintenance grant of \$511 and continued medical coverage.

The program provides 53 scholarships to high school or college students who are in DCFS care or who moved to adoption or guardianship from DCFS. More than 250 students completed applications for the DCFS Scholarship Program, leaving the selection committee with difficult decisions among many worthy candidates. Scholarship recipients were chosen based on scholastic aptitude, a written personal statement and demonstrated community involvement.

The students selected for the 2016 scholarships celebrated at a luncheon in July. The day began with a full morning workshop on tips to successfully transition to college. They then moved to the upper level of the Alhambra restaurant for a lunch buffet and program. For many it was a second, more intimate, graduation ceremony than they had in high school. *(continued)*



53 scholarship recipients at the Alhambra Palace, Chicago.

2016 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Madison Angel	Abigail Gound	Chelsea Prather
D'Angelo Baker	Shakira Govan	Mary Ann Rasmussen
Matthew Baranowski	Unique Grissom	Hope Rush
Gregory Baseley	Gabriel Guzman	Rachel Satterwhite
Cassie Berman	Maria Hill	Christopher Schmidt
Jeffrey Board	Taylor Isaak	Kisha Schuler
Kayla Burke	Treyton Jansen	Jerrold Shaffer
Justin Coyle	Kyle Johnson	Travis Simmons
Ciera Dantzler	Keith Jones	Katie Smith
Jason Ditto	Joshua Kirby	Tesla Travelstead
Kierra Dowling-Garrott	Yasmine Koenig	Raven Trotter
Angela Duncan	Michelle Lewis	Emily Weeks
Kendra Escudero	Cortez Luttrell	Gabriella White
Derek Finney	Nickie Meyer	Nathaniel Whitfield
Keeley Flanigan	Cherree Miller	Czanel Wilkens-Hays
Mary Alice Ford	DonTerrance Nixon	Jarron Williams
Leyda Garcia	Trevor Page	Rashida Williams
Nicole Garth	Katherine Powell	



Message from the DCFS Director

The school year is in full swing. Our kids have

the opportunity to expand their knowledge, but new teachers, classmates and courses can bring challenges for them and all of you who take care of them. Still, there is much that we can all do to help and there is good news to report.

This fall 53 bright, hard-working students started the school year with support for tuition and fees through the DCFS Scholarship Program. At the send-off luncheon, parents, mentors and case managers sat beside them, amazed and uplifted by their stories of perseverance and academic achievement.

While these scholarship recipients are exceptional, they also prove that there is a path from DCFS that leads to “normal” milestones like high school graduation and higher education. It is a path open for all of our students, but they need your direction. Your homework comes in the form of school meetings for special services, discipline hearings and hours of advocacy. The DCFS/Northern Illinois University Education Advisors are on call for all DCFS and private agency foster parents. When advisors talk you through and walk with you to deal with school concerns, the partnership brings results.

As an agency, our mission boils down to doing what is right for the children in our care. Laying a solid foundation for education is critical. I thank you for all you are doing at home and at school to foster the big wins and the small classroom victories that add up to a successful school year.

George H. Sheldon
Director

Scholarship (cont.)

The guest speaker Rodney Walker spoke to students as one of them, a young person moving from DCFS care to a new academic setting. Walker knew the challenges, the fears and the strengths they had in common. However, he could let them know what was on the other side, having graduated and launched a successful career. As the program went on, rather than a principal handing out diplomas, DCFS Director George Sheldon congratulated each student and presented an engraved plaque to memorialize the accomplishment.

“This group proves that with support and encouragement, our kids in care can go on to accomplish all the goals they set. I see their courage, applaud their effort and look forward to witnessing their future success,” Sheldon said. ♡



Kyle Johnson (left), Keith Jones and all students left the ceremony loaded down with new book bags and items for their dorm rooms.

THE DCFS YOUTH IN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

is available to youth currently in DCFS care and to those who left department guardianship through adoption or private guardianship arrangements. The purpose of the program is to ensure that those selected have the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in four years or less. Scholarship Program Student Applications are routinely available in January with a deadline of March 31.

Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED by the end of the current school year. Contact the Office Education and Transition Services at **312-814-5959** for more information.

Adoption Advisory Council News



Pamela Mills

The September meeting of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council took place in Springfield.

Scott Cameron, a DCFS permanency achievement specialist in the Central Region, described how the statewide team can partner with a caseworker to address barriers that slow the move toward permanency. The specialists initially focus on family finding. They search deep and wide to identify members of the child's family who can be consistently involved with the child on a level

that ranges from phone calls to a formal placement. The permanency achievement specialists also help the caseworkers find creative solutions to work through other issues so that children can be successfully settled in an acceptable time frame.

The DCFS statewide administrator for adoption, Pamela Mills, discussed the role that adoption specialists fill when the permanency goal is adoption or guardianship. She heads a team of adoption specialists who are located in each of the DCFS regions. The specialists were recently matched with private agencies to be a resource to help cases move to adoption. The specialists will review the list of cases where adoption or guardianship is the goal. They will provide technical assistance to the caseworkers to help get the subsidy written correctly and submitted properly. This added level of service and attention is expected to shorten the timeframe leading up to the adoption or guardianship finalization. ♡

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council held its September meeting in Fairview Heights.

The new fiscal year brought many new members to the council.

Gwenn Eyer of DCFS conducted a training to acclimate the new members and refresh returning members on the responsibilities related to the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan review and scoring. Each foster care program is required to submit a plan to the council by November 15. Council members will score the plans based on how they reflect the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Law. The final scores are due in February.

The DCFS Guardian, Debra Dyer-Webster gave an update on the legislation Governor Rauner signed specific to foster care and related to child welfare.

After committee updates, the foster care council developed the agenda for the upcoming joint meeting with the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council on November 18 in Chicago.

For more information, contact DCFS Foster Parent Support at 217-524-2422. ♡

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council meets six times a year to discuss issues and make recommendations to DCFS regarding the concerns of adoptive and guardianship families. The council is made up of parents, professionals in the child welfare field and adopted individuals.

THE NEXT MEETING

of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council will be Friday November 18 in Chicago.

Call DCFS Caregiver and Parent Support at **217-524-2422** for details.

New Members

FOSTER PARENTS:

Southern Region
Kassie Johnson
Frankfurt, IL

Cook County
Trina Rizzo
Chicago, IL

AGENCY PROFESSIONALS:

Juan Carlos Arjona
Lutheran Social Services

Katy Cotts
Children's Home and Aid

Keep an eye on new policies that impact foster care families

At the Illinois State Fair in August, Governor Bruce Rauner conducted a bill signing ceremony where he enacted several pieces of legislation that directly affect youth in foster care and their families, both current and prospective.

HB 5551 – DCFS Fictive Kin

Expands the definition of “fictive kin” to include any individual, unrelated by birth or marriage, who is the foster parent of a child in the custody or guardianship of the DCFS, has established a significant and family-like relationship with the child and has been identified by the department as the child’s permanent connection.

HB 4590 – Adoption Info Disclosure

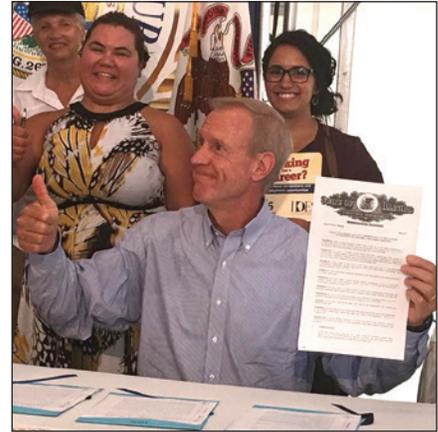
Amends the list of disclosures required to be made to the adoptive parents, to add facts and circumstances relating to the nature and cause of the adoption, information regarding how adoptive parents were identified and whether a request or efforts were made regarding continued contact or an open adoption.

Executive Order—Eliminate use of “ward” for youth in care

Governor Rauner signed an executive order that states:

- DCFS shall refrain from using the term “ward” except in situations required under Illinois statutes. DCFS shall instead use the term “youth in care” and other terms that show respect and encouragement to youth who are in state care.
- DCFS shall review and revise its administrative rules to accomplish the purpose of this Executive Order.
- DCFS shall work with the General Assembly to review all statutory references to youth as “wards” and support legislation replacing the term with “youth in care.”

The Governor said he was moved to enact this order after many discussions with young people who told him they wanted to be recognized as regular kids.



Governor Bruce Rauner signed new legislation at the Illinois State Fair.



Original artwork by youth at the Illinois State Fair.

DCFS Policy Updates

All DCFS policy guides, rules and procedures are available on the DCFS website at www.dcf.illinois.gov in the *About Us* section.

Here is a list of recent policy changes that may affect foster families.
For more information online: cfpolicy@idcf.state.il.us

RECENT POLICY GUIDES

Policy Guide 2016.09 Changes to Eligibility Criteria for the State Funded Option of Subsidized Guardianship, effective August 24, 2016. Children who are 12 years of age or older and placed with a licensed or unlicensed relative caregiver are now eligible for the state-funded option of subsidized guardianship.

Policy Guide 2016.10 Safety Plans

Provides updated forms outlining the rights and responsibilities for parents, caregivers, investigators, caseworkers and other safety plan participants. Details the content, modification and monitoring of safety plans.

Education Advisors help students in foster care thrive at school

With the school year under way, caregivers can now examine the transition to new teachers and assignments to see how students are progressing. Foster parents have a powerful resource ready to help with education issues. Through a partnership with Northern Illinois University, the DCFS/NIU education advisors advocate for youth in care.

The education advisors can assist with the assessments and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for special education. When there are behavioral issues, they can work out an intervention with the school. They can answer caregivers' questions and attend school meetings with them. They will help caregivers and caseworkers obtain appropriate educational services for the children. They also will help caregivers plan for education after high school.

With the background of working in or with schools before joining DCFS, education advisors know how to navigate the system. They understand school issues including special education, attendance policies, discipline and a host of other concerns. Working with an education advisor can be very positive and gratifying. They identify with and highly value caregivers and the children in their homes. They recognize and empathize with the frustrations and needs of both the education and child welfare systems, making them invaluable advocates.

The advisors are each well-versed in the federal and state education laws and DCFS Rule 314 concerning education services that must be provided to children in DCFS care. Since every school can have a slightly different way of doing things, it helps to have an education advisor sitting beside the caregiver as both advocate for the student. ♡

Education Advisors

NORTHERN REGION

Diane Fitzhugh

(Will, Kankakee counties)

708-210-3050

diane.fitzhugh@illinois.gov

Aundrea Nabors

(remaining counties)

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aundrea.nabors@illinois.gov

SOUTHERN REGION

Bessie Peabody

618-583-2141

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COOK NORTH/CHICAGO AND NORTHERN SUBURBS

Donnis Briscoe

312-328-2551

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COOK CENTRAL-CHICAGO AND WESTERN SUBURBS

Yasmina Sefiane

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yasmina.johnson@illinois.gov

COOK SOUTH-CHICAGO AND SOUTHERN SUBURBS

Arlecia Brown

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arlecia.brown@illinois.gov

CENTRAL REGION CHAMPAIGN AREA

Ann Wells

217-875-6797

ann.s.wells@illinois.gov

CENTRAL REGION SPRINGFIELD/PEORIA AREAS

Mary Chepulis

309-671-7952 or 217-557-3985

mary.chepulis@illinois.gov

Fresh Start donates life-changing corrective surgeries for kids



The DCFS Office of the Guardian has entered into a partnership with Fresh Start, a California-based nonprofit that provides free reconstructive surgery and related healthcare services to infants,

children and teens with physical deformities caused by birth defects, accidents, abuse or disease.

Fresh Start has expanded into Illinois. Fresh Start sponsors surgery weekends three times each year for multiple children. There is room to assist more children in what could be life changing surgeries that could be impossible to obtain without

Fresh Start.

Children do not have to live in Chicago to be eligible for the program. If you would like to refer a child to Fresh Start or have questions about the application process, including completing the application, available online at freshstart.org or ask your caseworker for more details. ♡

College financial aid application period moved to October

The door to financial assistance for college opens with the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. The federal government recently announced a change in the due date to apply for funds for the 2017-18 school year. The application period now opens in October, not in January 2017.

The October 1, 2016 date was selected as a way to allow families to have information about potential financial aid earlier in their decision process. By submitting the FAFSA in October or soon after, the expected family contribution (EFC) will be known in the fall during the time that high school seniors typically apply to schools. Since

families would have a clearer picture of what amount they might have to cover, they could avoid applying to a school that would be too costly to attend.

Financial aid for incoming and returning students is often awarded on a first-in, first-out basis, so it is important to stay ahead of deadlines. Most schools require incoming freshmen to commit to attending by May 1. The October start to the financial aid process should result in financial aid offering letters going to families sooner. Thus, families could have more time to weigh packages and make decisions.

Youth applying for financial aid while still under the care of DCFS typically receive substantial assistance based on their status as independent students. Youth who were adopted or moved to guardianship may be eligible for aid, based on their family income. Many private schools and scholarship programs request students file a FAFSA for consideration. The FAFSA has essentially become a requirement, so be sure to get it in as early as possible. ♡

Details at www.fasfa.gov.

Be sure to get and keep a fresh copy of the Health Passport

The DCFS “Health Passport” is a paper copy summary of a child’s health records and history, as recorded by the health care providers who have examined the child.

Caregivers must take the Health Passport to all medical appointments and have medical care providers update it with current regular immunizations and other relevant health information.

The child’s caseworker is responsible for printing out and providing the foster parent a current Health Passport, at least every year and when asked. Additionally, at each Administrative Case Review (ACR), the child’s most recent Health Passport entries will be entered for the child’s case file. Caregivers must bring the Health Passport and related health documents to each ACR.



If a child moves to a new foster home placement, the Health Passport moves with the child. Foster caregivers are responsible for sending the Health Passport with the caseworker when the child leaves. Youth in care who are 14 years old and older should also receive a copy of their Health Passport.

Caregivers without an updated Health Passport for a child in their home should request a copy from the caseworker. Call the DCFS Office of Health Policy at 217-557-2689 with questions. ♡

GET YOUR FLU SHOT

Getting the flu vaccination is the primary tool for preventing influenza, during the upcoming flu season. A flu vaccination can lower the risk of a bothersome and potentially serious bout of the flu. Some of the symptoms associated with the flu are fever, headache, cough, sore throat, chills and fatigue. Some people are at higher risk of complications from having the flu, such as developing pneumonia. Those people who may be at higher risk for complications are children between six months and five years old, pregnant women, people 50 years or older, and those with chronic illnesses.

Most people over the age of five months old can get the flu shot. The flu vaccination is available at no charge for those children enrolled in Medicaid.

For more information about the upcoming flu season, go the website www.flu.gov or contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-4977. ♡

Cook County Advocate

**News
for Chicago
Metro Area Families**



2016 • Vol. 4

Cook Region sends 15 DCFS scholarship recipients to college

This year, 15 students who come from communities in the DCFS Cook County Region or have cases served by programs in the region headed to college with the benefits included in the DCFS Scholarship program. The scholarship includes a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees when attending one of the nine Illinois state universities or an Illinois community college, a monthly maintenance grant of \$511 and a medical card.

Scholarship recipients were chosen statewide on the basis of scholastic aptitude, a written personal statement and demonstrated community involvement. Next year's scholarship application process begins in January and ends in March. Contact the youth's caseworker or the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959 for more information on the scholarship program.



Matthew Baranowski, from Chicago Ridge, graduated in 2014 from Marist High School, where he earned a 3.43 GPA on

a 4.0 scale. While in high school, Matthew participated in the NATO-UN Summit. At Moraine Valley Community College, Matthew was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and was on the Dean's List. Outside of school, Michael has been involved with the Boy Scouts since first grade and achieved the highest rank of Eagle Scout. He volunteered his time shoveling snow for seniors and planned, organized and executed a community project by painting 25 fire hydrants. Now Matthew attends the University of Illinois as a major in business.



Justin Coyle graduated from Tinley Park High School where he earned a 5.29 GPA on a 4.0 scale. While

in high school, he participated in cross country and tennis, serving as team captain in both sports. Justin also participated in Guy Poms, student council, freshman and sophomore leadership team, Youth and Government, history club, and Mathletes. Justin was inducted into the National Honor Society and was recognized as an Illinois State Scholar. He received the Titan Academic Scholar Award, Student of the Month, AP English Award, and academic honors and high honors. Justin volunteered his time assisting at a local elementary school and doing peer tutoring. He also helped with student council sponsored events and the National Honor Society induction of the junior class. Justin is studying at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and plans to major in hospitality and business.



Ciera Dantzer graduated in 2014 from Rowe-Clark Math & Science Academy in Chicago. While

in high school, she participated in cheerleading, Chosen Voice Gospel Choir, and Life Coaches for Young Women. Ciera earned a 3.72 GPA on a 4.0 scale and was a member of the National Honor Society. She was a recipient of the Community Service Award, Lady Award, and Top Ten Award. She has volunteered her time at the Salvation Army, Humboldt Park, YMCA's Kelly Hall, and Mount Bethlehem Church. Ciera attends the University of Illinois Springfield, majoring in social work.



Derek Finney graduated from Chicago's Northside College Preparatory High School. While in high

school, he participated in flag football, junior varsity basketball, weight lifting, Going Ape, Urban Agriculture, Beginning String Ensemble, and USAG Gymnastics, receiving numerous honors. He also published a story in the Student Short Story contest and won a citywide essay contest. Derek was

awarded a scholarship to attend Flatiron School to learn computer coding. He earned a 2.83 GPA on a 4.0 scale. He also volunteered at Fed with Grace, Best Buddies, and Going Ape. Derek attends Ohio University with a major in computer science.



Shakira Govan

graduated from Daniel Hale Williams Prep School of Medicine in Chicago.

She earned a 3.78 GPA on a 4.0 scale. While in high school, she was a member of Roman Greek/Latin club, Freshman Seminar club, and the pre-professional nursing program. Shakira was inducted into the National Honor Society, received the Citizenship Award, a Clinical Council Cardiology participation certificate, the Woman to Woman Empowerment Certificate and was on the honor roll. She volunteered her time at South Shore Hospital and at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Shakira is studying nursing at Chicago State University.



Maria Hill,

from Berkeley, graduated from Walther Christian Academy. In high school, she was a member of the girls varsity

track & field team, girls volleyball team, pep band and wind ensemble, drama club and Momentum program. She also served as the student council president. Maria was inducted into the National Honor Society and was on the high honor roll, finishing school with a 3.75

GPA on a 4.0 scale. She was selected to attend several summer camps including Walgreens Pharmacy Technician Camp, Girls Adventures in Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Camp. She volunteered with the Boys & Girls Club of West Cook County and an After School Program, served as a Cook County election judge, and was a counselor for Memorial Park District's Summer Day Camp. Maria attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison, majoring in pre-pharmacy.



Kyle

Johnson is from Matteson. He graduated from Rich South High School where he earned a 4.04 GPA on a 5.0

scale. He was a member of varsity boys volleyball, student council, Key Club, and served as the school newspaper editor. Kyle was awarded the Outstanding Student Award, was on the high honor roll, and was inducted into the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. He volunteered his time at a soup kitchen, the Santa breakfast, and with Snowball. Kyle is now a student at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, pursuing a degree in pharmacy.



Keith Jones

is a graduate of Northside College Preparatory High School in Chicago. He earned a 3.37 GPA on a 4.0

scale. In high school, he was part of the cross-country, track & field and basketball teams. He also was a

member of the Black Student Union. Keith was a volunteer tutor at his high school and in the summer program, "Learn and Earn." Now Keith is studying biology at Northern Illinois University.



Katherine Powell

graduated from Chicago's Whitney M. Young Magnet High School where she earned a 4.65

GPA on a 5.0 scale. In high school she was a member of yearbook, Best Buddies, I Am She and the Whitney Young Symphony and Chamber Orchestra. She was inducted into the National Honor Society, was on the honor roll and principal's honor roll, and was recognized as a National Merit Commended Scholar and a laureate of Le Grand Concours national French competition, and won the Ron Brown Scholarship. Katherine has volunteered her time with After School Matters, Gallery 37, and Dance Ensemble. She is now studying at Princeton University as an English major with a creative writing track.



Jerrold Shaffer

graduated from Nicholas Senn High School in Chicago where he earned a 4.02 GPA on a 6.0 scale.

In high school, he was a member of debate team and guitar club. Jerrold studied in the International Baccalaureate program, where he took part in academically accelerated classes. He participated in an internship program at Loyola. He

also volunteered his time with After School Matters International Chefs, the Chicago Triathlon, and ASM Sustainable Environment. Jerrold now attends the University of Illinois at Chicago, majoring in chemistry.



Travis Simmons

is a graduate of Urban Prep Charter Academy for Young Men's Englewood Campus in

Chicago. He earned a 3.8 GPA on a 4.0 scale. While in high school, he was a member of the poetry club, football, hip-hop club and chess team. Travis was on the honor roll, Summa Cum Laude and received the "Gold Tie" numerous times for his accomplishments. Outside of school, he volunteered his time with the park district and during election polls. He was also involved with the anti-cruelty society, food banks, safety service system and True Star Magazine. Travis also served as a tutor at an elementary school. Now he attends Southern Illinois University Carbondale, pursuing a degree in business administration.



Raven Trotter

graduated from Oak Park and River Forest High School, where she earned a 3.19 GPA on a

4.0 scale. While in high school, she was a member of varsity gymnastics, HASO, student council, dance team, cross country, track and field, Spanish club, and color guard. Raven received the Bloodstone Award for poetry, varsity letter for gymnastics, and a Leader Award for dancing. She also volunteered with Hephzibah, YMCA, Best Buddies, Key Club, and SILC. Raven is now a student at Eastern Illinois University, majoring in special education.

Czanel Wilkens-Hays

graduated from The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School in Chicago, where she earned a 3.57 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She was selected for the Student Leadership Program and received Mercy Home Honors. Czanel was certified as a lifeguard and as a PADI open water scuba diver. She also volunteered her time at Lydia Learn and Care and at MASC Sport Camp. Czanel is now studying at Cornell College in Iowa with plans to major in early childhood development and special education.

Jarron Williams, from Dolton, is a 2015 graduate of Thornridge High School, where he earned a 3.30 GPA on a 4.0 scale. While in high school, he was a member of the competitive speech team, competitive drama team, theater club and poetry club. Jarron completed his freshman year Northern Illinois University. He joined the Creative Writing Team and is the editor of NIU's literary magazine. Jarron

received special honors from his years of theater and speech. Outside of academics he volunteered with Project Kindle and was named Activist of the Year. Jarron also volunteered his time with other HIV/AIDS education programs, including appearing in a Nickelodeon Channel special discussing HIV. Jarron is continuing his education at Northern Illinois University, majoring in English education.



Rashida Williams

is a graduate of Noble Street College Prep in Chicago, where she earned a 3.83 grade point average

on a 4.0 scale. In high school, she was a member of fitness and leadership, yearbook, Writers' Bloc, and cross country. Rashida was on the high honor roll, recognized as an Illinois State Scholar, and won honorable mention for her narrative essay "How I Got Here." She also volunteered at Concordia Place's Ruckus Entrepreneurs program. Rashida is now an English major at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. ♡

Cook County Region Training

DCFS has scheduled sessions of in-service training modules and other courses in locations across the region.

To get specific dates and locations, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center (VTC) anytime at www.DCFstraining.org. Click on any of the links under Training Schedule to access course descriptions, in-service training and Educational Advocacy Training or call the DCFS Registration Line at 877-800-3393 during business hours.

The Virtual Training Center (VTC) is your tool to:

- See training news and general information
- Check available trainings
- View and print your training transcript
- Register and take on-line courses



DIGITAL TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE

DCFS Training has made many PRIDE materials available online at:

www.dcfstraining.org

Who do you call when...?

...A child in your home is having a psychiatric crisis that may require hospitalization? Call the CARES line at 800-345-9049. However, if a child is a danger to himself or others, call 911 first. The CARES line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

...You want information on becoming a foster parent or on adoption? The Illinois Center for Adoption & Permanency (ICAP) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. ICAP also maintains information about the children who are featured in the newsletter.

...You have questions about your board check? Call the DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. If your check comes from a private agency, contact the agency.

...You need to report a child missing or have information about a youth who has run away? To report information on missing youth call 866-503-0184. The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day every day of the week. If you feel the child is in danger, call 911 first.

...Your adoption or guardianship is final but you have questions about the subsidy? Call the subsidy worker assigned to the case or the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250 so you can be connected to the right individual for help.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? If you've already tried to resolve the issue by going up the chain of command with the caseworker and supervisors, then call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...You need to seek expense reimbursement for property damage or bodily harm caused by a child in foster care? Let your caseworker know you intend to submit a claim to the Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program. Refer to DCFS form CFS851 or contact the office at 312-814-7294.

...You have questions about your child's medical card? Call 800-228-6533.

...You need to find a phone number for a caseworker? Call the main switchboard in Chicago at 312-814-6800 or the State Operator at 312-793-3500.

... The police request to interview or a child under DCFS care is detained by police? Call the DCFS Guardianship Administrator Office at 312-814-8600 if between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., if after 4:30 p.m. or before 8:30 a.m. call the 24-hour Child Intake and Recovery Unit at 866-503-0184 to notify DCFS and discuss possible legal assistance.

...You are having family problems with an adopted child? Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program that serves your area. Call the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250.

...You are having a hard time getting services for your child at school? Most private agencies have an education liaison, and each DCFS region has education advisors who can help. Call your agency or nearest DCFS office to be connected to the right educational resource for your area.

...You have an idea for the newsletter? Email vanessa.james@illinois.gov in DCFS Communications.

A Family for Me: Call 1-800-572-2390 for more information



Precious, 15, is a very likable and friendly. She enjoys staying active and participating in extracurricular activities such as playing basketball and running

track. Precious also enjoys listening to music and playing on her tablet.

Sometimes Precious can have difficulty dealing with her emotions and shuts down when things don't go her way. She may struggle with being told "NO" by those who have authority over her; however, she can be easily redirected.

Precious would do best with a family that is caring and consistent. She tends to live in the moment, so having someone that is understanding and encouraging is very important. It is also important that the adoptive family for Precious respect the relationship that she has with her Grandmother and siblings. She should keep in contact with them as they are very important people in her life. Precious said that she would really love a two-parent family because she has always wanted a mom and a dad. [C8336]



Jair (Alex), who likes to go by the name Alex, is 13 years old. He likes playing outside and playing basketball. He also enjoys card games, reading,

and building things with LEGO pieces. Alex likes passing around a football, as well as practicing basketball dribbling and shooting. He also likes to watch movies and play with remote-

controlled cars. Alex stated that his favorite toys are his Batman car and his personal DVD player.

Those close to Alex say well-mannered. He like to start up conversations with 'Hello' and asking people how their day is going. Alex likes to know the schedule for his day and he likes sticking to it. He also likes to ask a lot of questions for clarification. He shares well with others and is willing to help peers or caretakers when asked. Alex proudly keeps a neat and orderly room. In school, Alex does a great job and does very well academically, getting mostly A's and B's on his report cards. He has made strong bonds with his teachers and has not received any negative reports from school.

Alex wants his adoptive family to be "smart, nice, kind, and helpful." He would like the family to have a TV, Netflix, an XBOX, and a clean home with nice rooms. He would prefer a family with a dog or a cat. Alex states that he wants "a family with no other kids or with a brother who is older." The family should also be familiar or open to parenting a child with blood-born diseases, developmental delays, fetal alcohol syndrome, and liver diseases. [C8361]



Tahjae, 9, loves to play all the time! He enjoys playing with his toy cars, electronic games, action figures and board games. He also enjoys a good

game of basketball. Tahjae has a special interest in first responders, like EMTs, firefighters, police, doctors and nurses.

The people who know him well say Tahjae will often use a "baby" voice

when talking to adults. He often fabricates situations to as a way avoid consequence. He is making progress in being cooperative even when he does not get his way.

Tahjae would benefit from a family that will be very invested in him. He needs lots of attention, love and affection. He does well in a structured home that has daily routines. He also needs to be made aware and prepared for changes in daily routines. Parents for Tahjae can work with professionals in the field to meet his behavioral and educational needs. [C8371]



Yaendi, 9, is energetic, playful and thoughtful. She is a curious child who loves to be a part of everything. She enjoys school and loves interacting with her peers.

Yaendi's teachers say she is a ball of energy and enjoys being a helper. Yaendi appreciates spending time with her sisters, friends, and family.

To be the right family for Yaendi, you can remain patient while giving her time to adjust to her new and permanent home. You can help her maintain close, meaningful relationships that are important to her. You can work with professionals to address her emotional and behavioral needs. Yaendi would like to join a family that is active and likes to have fun. [C8238] ♥

Please call 1-800-572-2390 if you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children who are waiting to be adopted.



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Bruce Rauner, Governor

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